

REMARKS

Prior to amendment Claims 2-20 were pending in this application. After amendment Claims 2-14, and 20-24 are pending in this application. Claims 1, and 15-19 have been canceled, without prejudice.

Claims Rejection - Section 103(a)

Claims 2-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Wilson et al. (EP 1025813 A2) in view of Lenker et al. (5,683,451).

Claim 2, has been amended to recite a spacer assembly, consistent with the amended specification comprising an elongated tubular channel spacer 62 and a tubular spacer 64 (pg 7, li. 13). To the extent that there are members with channels shown in the cited prior art, none of those channel containing members can reasonably be characterized as a spacer assembly supporting the inner shaft with respect to the outer shaft by eliminating slack when the outer shaft is moved with respect to the inner shaft, consistent with the present specification. Wilson et al. by Examiner's own comments does not contain a channel spacers. Lenker, also cited by the Examiner contains channels in the outer shaft, not a channel assembly which supports the inner shaft configured to eliminate slack when the inner and outer shafts are moved with respect to each other.

Newly presented claims 20-24, recite particular aspects of the invention as already disclosed in the specification. No new matter has been added.

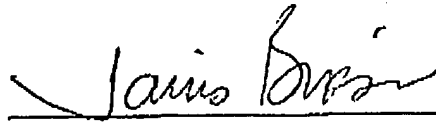
CONCLUSION

Applicant believes that claims are patentable for the reasons set forth above, and that the application is now in a condition for allowance. Accordingly, a notice of allowance is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

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